

CLAIMS

1. A telecommunications security device in the form of a separate unit stored in a lockable housing (46), the
5 device comprising:

(i) a first connector (12) for connection to a telecommunications device (14, 15);

10 (ii) a second connector (16) for connection to a telecommunications line (18);

15 (iii) a switch (20, 21) having a normally closed position in which a signal pathway (22, 23) within the security device between the first connector (12) and the second connector (16) is enabled and an open position in which the signal pathway (22, 23) is interrupted;

20 (iv) a control device (24, 25) for controlling the position of the switch (20, 21);

25 (v) a programmable memory (26, 27) for storing allowed signal sequences and at least one authorised pass number;

30 (vi) a comparator (30) in operative connection with the control device (24, 25) for comparing signals on the pathway (22, 23) with the allowed stored signal sequences, the control device (24, 25) being adapted to open the switch (20, 21) when a signal on the pathway (22, 23) does not match one of the stored signal sequences;

35 (vii) a programmer (32) adapted to receive pass numbers and programming signals from a remote telecommunications device (52) via a telecommunications line connected to the second connector (16), the programmer (32) including an

authorised pass number recognition device (34) for comparing a received pass number with the authorised pass numbers stored in the memory (26, 27), and being adapted to program the memory (26, 27) only when an authorised pass number is received and

(viii) a battery (42) for powering the security device, wherein the control device (24, 25) is adapted to open the switch (20, 21) when no operative telecommunications device (14, 15) is connected to the first connector (12), thereby to save battery power;

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15 2. A telecommunications security device according to claim 1, wherein the lock (48) of the housing (46) is key operated.

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20 3. A telecommunications security device according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the control device (24, 25) is adapted to open the switch (20, 21) when the lockable housing (46) is unlocked.

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25 4. A telecommunications security device according to any preceding claim, wherein the telecommunications device (15) is the modem of a computer, wherein the control device (25) is adapted to open the switch (21) when the modem is connected to an Internet service provider and signal sequences on the pathway (23) do not match one of the stored signal sequences.

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- 15 -

5. A telecommunications security device according to any preceding claim, further comprising a third connector (49) for connecting the security device to a telephone handset (50), the third connector (49) being connected within the security device to the programmer (32), whereby the memory (26) can be further programmed by use of the handset (50).

10 6. A method of controlling a telecommunications device by the use of a security device in the form of a separate unit stored in a lockable housing (46), which device comprises:

15 (i) a first connector (12) connected to the telecommunications device (14, 15),

15 (ii) a second connector (16) connected to a telecommunications line (18),

20 (iii) a switch (20, 21) having a normally closed position in which a signal pathway (22, 23) within the security device between the first connector (12) and the second connector (16) is enabled and an open position in which the signal pathway (22, 23) is interrupted,

25 (v) a programmable memory (26, 27);

(vi) a programmer (32) adapted to program the programmable memory (26, 27); and

30 (vii) a battery (42) for powering the security device;

the method comprising:

35 storing at least one authorised pass number in said

- 16 -

programmable memory (26, 27);

5 providing pass numbers and programming signals, including allowed signal sequences, from a remote telecommunications device (52) via the telecommunications line connected to the second connector to said programmer (32);

10 comparing a received pass number with the authorised pass number(s) stored in the memory (26, 27);

15 programming the memory (26, 27) with said allowed signal sequences only when an authorised pass number is received;

20 comparing signals on the pathway (22, 23) with the allowed stored signal sequences;

25 opening the switch (20, 21) when a signal on the pathway (22, 23) does not match one of the stored signal sequences; and

opening the switch (20, 21) when no operative telecommunications device (14, 15) is connected to the first connector (12), thereby to save battery power.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the switch (20, 21) is opened when the lockable housing (46) is unlocked.

30 8. A method according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the security device further comprises a third connector (49) for connecting the security device to a telephone handset (50), the third connector (49) being connected within the security device to the programmer (32), the method comprising further programming the memory (26) by use of the handset (50).

- 17 -

9. A method according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein
the telecommunications device (15) is the modem of a
computer, and the method comprises opening the switch (21)
when the modem is connected to an Internet service provider
and signal sequences on the pathway (23) do not match one of
the stored signal sequences.